

# THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

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Friday, December 12, 2025



## Top News

- Immigration courts thrown into chaos as Trump administration purges dozens of judges
- Starmer and hardline governments risk creating 'hierarchy of people' by constraining human rights
- Maduro says the real reason for Trump's Venezuela fixation is oil – is he right?
- Teens, Social Media and AI Chatbots 2025
- Most Americans say government has a responsibility to ensure health care coverage
- Many religions are heavily concentrated in a few countries

## Immigration courts thrown into chaos as Trump administration purges dozens of judges

A massive purge of judges has left the federal government's web of immigration courts decimated and in disarray. Ousted jurists believe that's by design.

The roster of those who've lost their jobs since President Donald Trump returned to office includes judges with higher than average rates of granting migrants asylum, judges with dual citizenship and those with a history of providing legal defense to immigrants. But not all of them fit that mold.

"It's about destroying a system where cases are carefully considered by people with knowledge of the subject matter," said Olivia Cassin, a former New York immigration judge pushed out of her job late last month. "They're firing everyone."

So far this year, the Trump administration has dismissed at least 98 of the approximately 700 immigration judges who were on the bench, according to the National Association of Immigration Judges, an organization that advocates for independent immigration courts.

Continue Reading: [apple.news](https://apple.news)



A federal agent patrols a New York immigration court where several judges have been purged this year. | Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images

# Starmer and hardline governments risk creating 'hierarchy of people' by constraining human rights

Keir Starmer and Europe's hardline governments risk creating a "hierarchy of people" as they seek to address migration by curbing fundamental rights, Europe's most senior human rights official has said.

Michael O'Flaherty, the Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights, said that "middle-of-the-road politicians" are playing into the hands of the populist right.

Speaking exclusively to the Guardian, he pointed to the "lazy correlation" of migration and crime as an example. "This doesn't correspond with reality," he said.

"For every inch yielded, there's going to be another inch demanded," he said. "Where does it stop? For example, the focus right now is on migrants, in large part. But who is it going to be about next time around?"

Continue Reading: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com)



People at Gravelines, France prepare to make a Channel crossing. The Council of Europe's commissioner for human rights says conflating migration and crime 'doesn't correspond with reality'. Photograph: Carl Court/Getty Images

## Maduro says the real reason for Trump's Venezuela fixation is oil – is he right?

Venezuela's dictator, Nicolás Maduro, says the real motive behind the massive US military buildup in the Caribbean is oil: his country has the largest proven reserves in the world.

The US state department denies this, insisting that the airstrikes on boats that have killed more than 80 people and the vast military deployment off South America are part of a campaign against drug trafficking.

Either way, Donald Trump seems bent on regime change in Venezuela – a country whose main allies are China, Russia and Iran, and one that has endured a deep economic collapse that triggered the region's largest migration crisis.

However, Trump has proved happy to reach an understanding with authoritarian leaders elsewhere, and airstrikes on small boats in the Caribbean are unlikely to have much impact on the flow of drugs – most of which enter the country through Mexico – leading critics of the US president to conclude that there must be another motive at work.

Colombia's president warns Trump: 'Do not wake the jaguar' with threats of military strikes

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A Petróleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA) oil pumpjack on Lake Maracaibo in Cabimas, Zulia state, Venezuela, in 2023. Photograph: Gaby Orda/Bloomberg via Getty Images



# Teens, Social Media and AI Chatbots 2025



(LeoPatrizi)

Roughly 1 in 5 U.S. teens say they are on TikTok and YouTube almost constantly. At the same time, 64% of teens say they use chatbots, including about 3 in 10 who do so daily.

Even as teens express mixed feelings about social media's impact, these sites remain a key part of their lives, with some using them "almost constantly."

Now, AI chatbots, like ChatGPT and Character.ai, are getting teens' attention. Roughly two-thirds report using chatbots, including about three-in-ten who do so daily, according to a new Pew Research Center survey of 1,458 U.S. teens ages 13 to 17.

## Which online platforms teens use

Young people turn to a variety of platforms, but YouTube stands out for being used by nearly all teens. Roughly nine-in-ten report ever using it.

## Teens widely use three other platforms:

- About six-in-ten or more say they use TikTok and Instagram.
- A somewhat smaller share say they go on Snapchat (55%).
- Fewer use Facebook (31%) and WhatsApp (24%). And no more than about one-in-five say the same of Reddit or X (formerly Twitter).

Continue Reading: [religionnews.com](https://www.religionnews.com)

## Most Americans say government has a responsibility to ensure health care coverage

Most Americans (66%) say the federal government has a responsibility to make sure all Americans have health care coverage. Far fewer (33%) say it does not, according to a Pew Research Center survey conducted Nov. 17-30, 2025, among 10,357 U.S. adults.

Yet those who say the federal government has this responsibility are split over how it should ensure coverage:

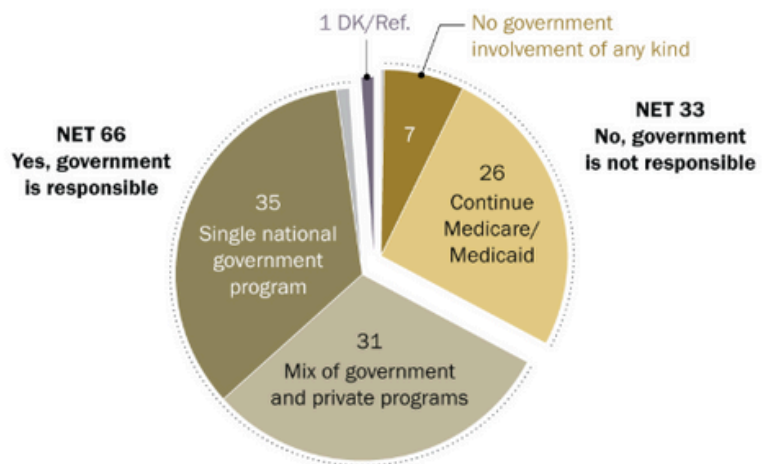
- 35% of all adults favor a single national health insurance system run by the government.
- 31% say insurance should continue to be provided through a mix of private companies and government programs.

Most of those who say the federal government is not responsible for ensuring coverage say it should continue to cover seniors and the very poor through Medicare and Medicaid:

- 26% of all adults say these programs should continue.
- 7% say the federal government should not be involved in providing health insurance at all.

## About two-thirds of U.S. adults say government should make sure all Americans have health care

*Is it the federal government's responsibility to make sure all Americans have health care coverage (%)?*



Note: Those who said government should or should not be responsible but did not offer a more specific response are shown but not labeled.

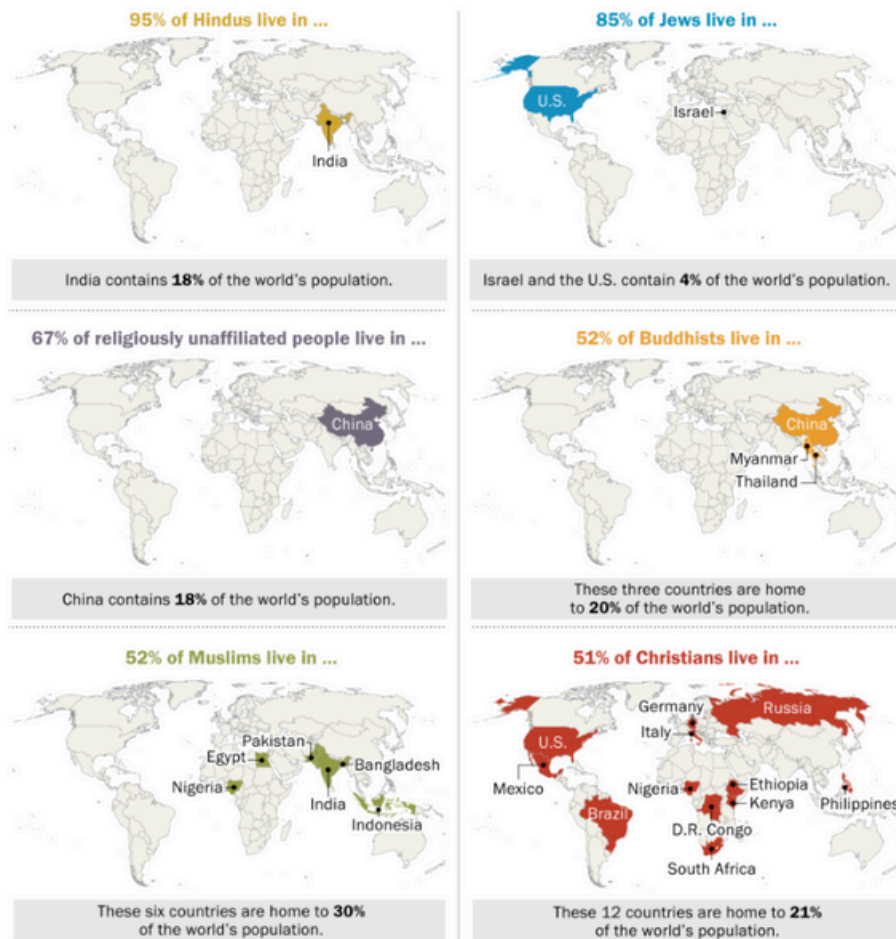
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 17-30, 2025.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Continue Reading: [pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org)

# Many religions are heavily concentrated in a few countries

## Where a majority of the followers of religious groups live



Note: Myanmar is also called Burma.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on more than 2,700 censuses and surveys.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Half of the world's population lives in just seven countries. But some of the world's religious groups are even more concentrated than that.

For many years, demographers at Pew Research Center have been studying the characteristics of religious groups, including Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and the religiously unaffiliated (sometimes called "nones").

While Christians and Muslims are more widely distributed around the world, the majority of the other groups' populations reside in three or fewer nations, according to estimates from our latest report on the global religious landscape. All figures in this analysis are based on 2020 data.

Continue Reading: [pewresearch.org](https://pewresearch.org)

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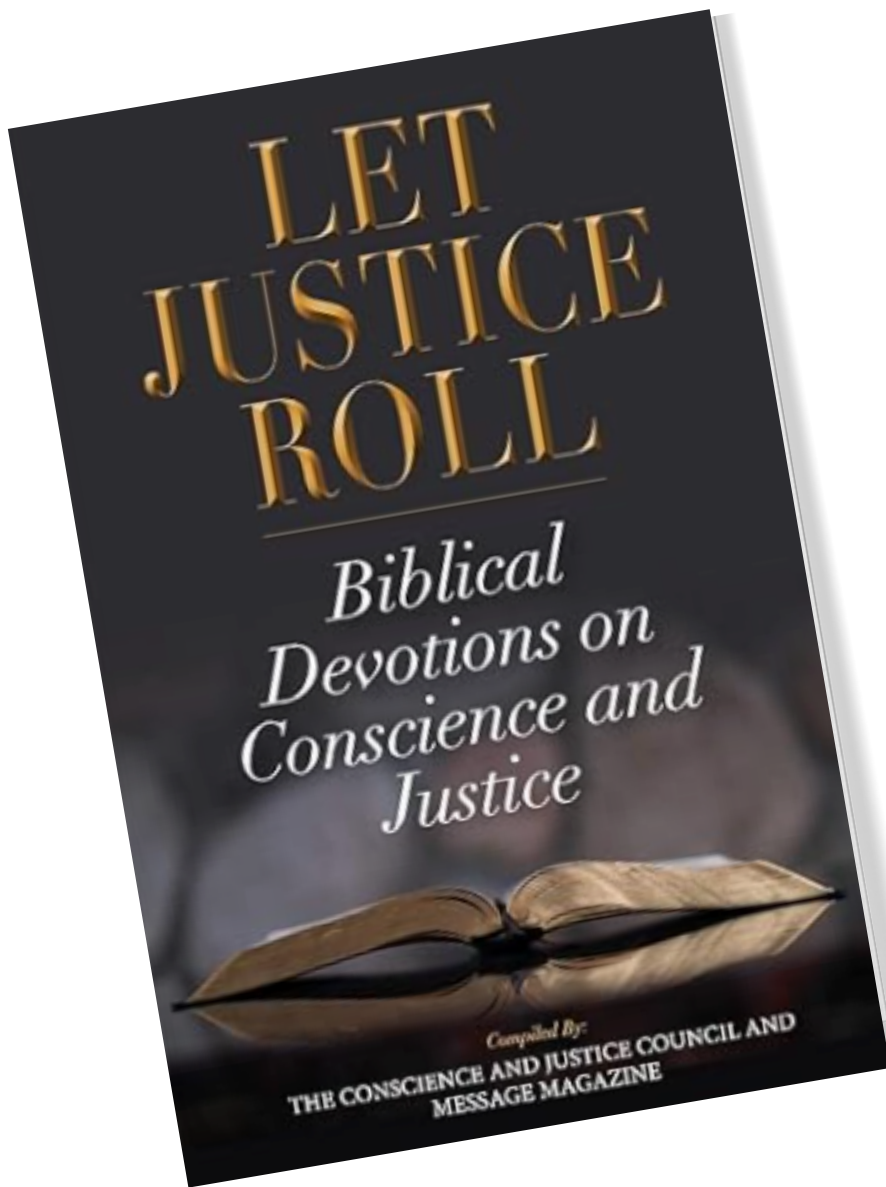
**FRIDAY  
DEC 19  
8 P.M. EDT  
7 P.M. CDT  
LIVE STREAM**

   
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnDjWGEal4Y>

**WATCH VIDEO**





## Let Justice Roll: Biblical Devotions on Conscience and Justice

"Let Justice Roll" is a compelling devotional that walks the reader through 365 days of biblical insights in freedom of conscience, and social justice. This compilation of articles represents the work of a nationwide network of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) advocates and other connected community activists.

The components of conscience and justice ministry include conscience, discipleship, engagement, fellowship, the power of the Holy Spirit, love, and prophecy. This is a must-read book for all followers of Christ and those who seek spiritual growth. Get ready to explore the profound biblical insights in this masterful book.

Order your copy [HERE](#)



## OUR PURPOSE

This newsletter aims to highlight news articles relating to religious liberty, civil rights, and social justice. The Conscience & Justice Council desires to be attuned with society so that we may change the nation by impacting one community at a time. Articles linked above are meant to provoke thought and discussion on important topics, and do not always express options or views endorsed by the CJC.

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